

The whole incident took only five minutes (16.15 to 16.20 hrs.). Visibility was quite good. Throughout the birds were in an upright position, perching across the branch like ordinary passerines.

It is not quite improbable that some other components of courtship display (such as the 'strutting' described by Henry in *L. beryllinus* and by Buckley in *L. galgulus*) had preceded the display observed by me, though one would expect such manifestations of mounting excitement (no pun intended !) to occur just before copulation. Still, in the incident reported above, the two birds sat quietly shoulder to shoulder for a few moments just before the male began leaping over the female.

I do not think that during the period when the birds were under observation the male fed the female ; nor did he hold his body erect or fluff out his throat feathers. For most of the time the male held his body in a horizontal position.

I am very grateful to Sri S. Parameswara Iyer, District Forest Officer, Trivandrum, and Sri R. Parameswaran, Professor of Zoology, College for Women, Trivandrum, but for whose kindness I would not have been at Kallar on that day.

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April 14, 1973.

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5. OCCURRENCE OF THE STARLING, *STURNUS VULGARIS* LINNAEUS NEAR BANGALORE

According to the INDIAN HANDBOOK (Ali & Ripley 1972), the Starling, *Sturnus vulgaris* Linnaeus is not known to winter in southern India, only a few stragglers having been taken from Madras, Bombay and near Minicoy Island. Whistler & Kinnear (1934) opined that the starling was evidently only a winter straggler to the erstwhile Madras Presidency and Phillips (1963) reported a sight record of a single starling at sea, about 40 miles west of Minicoy Island on December 10, 1954. Abdulali (1965) collected three specimens out of a flock of about a dozen starlings at Rewas in Alibag taluk (Kolaba district, Maharashtra) and put them down as *S.v. poltaratskyi* Finsch. Ali & Ripley (1972) state that this subspecies is an abundant winter visitor to southern Pakistan and conti-

mental India south to Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. Besides the abovementioned records of stragglers, the starling is not known to winter in southern India.

On October 24, 1965, while out birding some 7-8 miles north-east of Bangalore, I saw a huge flock of about 300-350 myna-like birds in a harvested field adjoining an extensive patch of short open scrub. One specimen was shot out of this flock and later identified as *S. vulgaris*, most probably of the race *poltaratskyi*. The remarkable thing about this record is the large number seen as opposed to single or at the most 12 birds recorded previously as stragglers.

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6. TREE SPARROW *PASSER MONTANUS* (L.) IN THE EASTERN GHATS

During the banding session of the B.N.H.S. bird migration study project at Lammasinghi in the Visakhapatnam section of the Eastern Ghats in April-May year 1972, we obtained a few specimens of the Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* (Linn.).

This is an interesting record as the distribution of the species according to the SYNOPSIS and FAUNA is northern parts of India along the Himalayan ranges east to Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan and south to Assam and Manipur etc.

The present record is the first from the E. ghats and adds northern Andhra to its known range.

The population of tree sparrows at Lammasinghi is more or less localised and the male specimen we preserved for record was in breeding condition as evinced by the enlarged gonads. Two species of